

# SAT SRI AKAL

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Tract No. 6.

## The Sikh And His New Critics

By

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## FOREWORD.

We think we need hardly apologize to the reader for reproducing in the form of a pamphlet the remarkable letters, written by our veteran writer, Sahibzada Bhagat Lakshman Singh, in reply to the uninformed criticism of the Sikh Gurus and their work by Babu Jadu Nath Sircar, now a days, a Professor in the Hindu College Benares, in Vol. III of his work on 'Aurangzeb'. The extract in question was given a prominent place in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, of which Babu Jadu Nath Sircar is the principal contributor. The replies appeared in the "Sikh Review" and the "Khalsa Advocate" and attracted great attention at that time. The Sikh Tract Society Mahilpur believes, with the *Khalsa Advocate* Amritsar, that "the whole series, together with the two letters on Sir Rabindra

Nath Tagore, will form a very interesting brochure, full of pathos and feeling, and brimming with a forceful refutation of the stock arguments on which uninformed writers on religion and history are so commonly seen to indulge. The *Khalsa Advocate* is also right in the opinion "that it is the duty of all literate Sikhs to keep themselves well put up in matters concerning the cardinal points of their religion; so that they may always be prepared to controvert the prevailing wrong notions about the noble work of our glorious Gurus" The Sikh Tract Society Mahilpur presents the reader with the brochure and trusts that all Sikhs, young or old, rich or poor, will provide themselves with a copy.

(SIKH TRACT SOCIETY, }

MAHILPUR.

Secretary.)



## SIR ROBINDRA NATH TAGORE ON THE SIKH GURUS.

No. 1.

A leading article has appeared from the pen of Professor Jadu Nath Sircar, M.A., in the April number of the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, for 1916 dealing with the Sikh Gurus. The article, so far as at least, as it relates to Sikhs and the Sikh Gurus is a clumsily piled farrogo of undigested facts. A similar effusion from the pen of this writer appeared in the April number of the *Modern Review*, in 1911. I then sent in a reply written in an extremely moderate and polite language. But the then management of the *Review* refused it insertion and returned it to me under a bearing cover. This rejected manuscript subsequently appeared in the "*Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar." Thus, so far as Punjab public was concerned, it was shown the other side of the picture also. A great deal of the misconception was removed and the venom poured forth was rendered innocuous. The reappearance of the same rodomontade in the same journal makes it paramount that an effective reply be written so that in future no penny-a-liner may feel emboldened to lightly talk of lands where even angels fear to tread. It will be good if the present conductors of the *Review* have the courtesy to give insertion to these lines so that ill-conceived and wrong notions that it has published about our divine Gurus may be removed.

It is difficult to dilate, in the space of a few pages, on the various side issues of Professor Jadu Nath's article. I shall confine myself to an examination of the theory set up by him that the last six Sikh Gurus and specially Guru Govind Singh cast off Baba Nanak's spirituality and arrogated to themselves worldly dignities which brought them into conflict with the Mughals and the fall of Sikhism was the result of this collision. To begin with I quote, in full, the excerpt from Babu, now Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore's book, on which Babu Jadu Nath Sircar bases his contention. Says Sir Rabindra.

"The liberation which Baba Nanak realized in his heart was not political liberty but spiritual freedom. Nanak had called upon his disciples to free themselves from selfishness, from narrow bigotry, from spiritual lethargy, Guru Govind Singh organized the Sikhs to suit a special purpose. He called in the human energy of the Sikhs from all other sides and made it flow in one particular channel only. They ceased to be full, free men. He converted the spiritual unity of the Sikhs into a means of worldly success. He dwarfed the unity of a religious sect into an instrument of political advancement. Hence the Sikhs, who had been advancing for centuries to be true men, now suddenly stopped short and became mere soldiers. The end of Sikh History looks very sad. When a river which had left the pure snowy cloud-kissing hill tops to reach the ocean disappears in a sandy plain, losing its motion, losing its song, a sorry sight is its failure. Even so when the pure white stream of energy which issued from a Bhagata's heart to cleanse and fertilize

the earth ends in the red mire of a military cantonment men can see no glory, no joy in it. To day there is no spirit of progress among the Sikhs. They have orystallized into a small sect. Centuries have failed to produce a new spiritual teacher from among them.

The authoritative tone in which the above paragraph is couched would make one believe that Sir Rabindra Nath is a great Sikh scholar, that he has read the Sikh scriptures including the Granth of Guru Govind Singh, and that he has read Sikh history from the original sources. But I dare say that the presumption is wrong. There are very few English knowing Sikhs even in the Punjab who are well-versed in their religious lore. It would be absurd to suppose that Sir Rabindra is more advanced in the study of Sikhism than the Punjab Sikhs. This deprives him of his right to pose as an authority on matters Sikh. Hence it will not be surprising if shorn of Brahmo rhetoric and verbiage, the above paragraph should appear as mere specious pleading, a rodомontade, pure and simple.

This pretentious paragraph reminds me of a personal anecdote of more than three decades back. I was then a bright young lad. My development was quite precocious. My parents were both Sanatani Hindus, highly devout and religious. Their days and nights were mostly taken up with the recitation of the Puranic literature and in the service of the Sadhus. Being their only living child,

then, they invariably took me with them when they went to Thakurdwaras, on the river side, to perform worship or hear "kathas" from Mahatmas. I was very assiduous in my devotion to Sadhus and learned Pandits. In their turn they became fond of me and I became quite a favourite of the then "Satsangis" of Rawalpindi. When I grew to be a young lad I knew more of the popular Hindu religion than most other Hindu boys of my age. I had also learnt the Christian Bible with great avidity. The works of Babu Ram Mohan Rai and Babu Keshab Chandra Sen had also a particular charm for me. Thus I was looked upon quite as a boy-Professor of religion. Little wonder, then, that in those days I should have been pressed, from week to week, and month to month, by the then Secretary of the Local Arya Samaj, God bless him !, for he is no more among the living), to stand up and lecture on religion. Now I should say to my credit that, though highly flattered by those around me, I was not unconscious of my own failings. Even at that age I was gifted with a critical judgment. I could never forget how an insignificant little thing I was, as compared with the Mahatmas at whose feet I had so often sat, whose mere sight, in the words of the Guru, "(Darshan bhetat hot nihal)" had sent in a thrill of joy into my whole frame and who, by a glance could throw open flood gates of light to illumine my soul and make me revel in the glory of the Eternal.

Not unoften I wondered why my unfortunate friends and relatives should have discarded the company of their Mahatmas and formed a coterie of their own, where the blind led the blind. The reader will, therefore, be amused to find that when, at last, I consented to lecture, and when I did stand to lect re, I chose for my subject "Who should lecture?" or "Who is qualified to lecture?" I availed myself of the opportunity afforded to me to dwell upon the ridiculousness, nay the sin of making boys, mere tyros in religion to stand up and pose as teachers and preachers, when their proper place was at the feet of their elders and their learned and holy persons, of whom there was no dearth even in those days. My remarks caused quite a flutter among the audience assembled though I am sorry to say that what I said appeared to me to fall quite flat most ears.

I am that old boy and, though, I am sure, my words will fail in their effect on Sir Rabindra and his coterie of admirers, among whom I may safely include B. Jada Nath Sircar, I make bold to say that Sir Rabindra is not the proper person to pose as an author of Sikh history and religion. I refuse to acknowledge him as an authority on matters Sikh, notwithstanding his reputed learning and erudition in his own language or in English. I wish Sir Rabindra, like John the Baptist, had the good sense to confess that he is not worthy of loosening the latches of the shoes

of a great man of Guru Govind Singh's holiness whose name is one to conjure with in the brave Punjab and all over the world where peoples' breasts enshrine bravery and chivalry.

To turn to the allegations in the afore-said paragraph I would at once say that it is quite wrong to assert that Guru Govind Singh "called in the human energy of the Sikhs from all other sides and made it flow in one particular channel." Guru Govind Singh's political work was infinitesimally small as compared with his spiritual work. The Sikhs regard Nanak in his 10th garb, and he was so in fact. Like Nanak he sang of God and glorified God. Like him he discarded riches and greatness of the world. "Trust in God and do the right" was the constant theme of his discourses. The following quartettes from his Granth would convey an idea of what Guru Govind Singh thought of worldly relatives and riches :—

Tau tan tiāgat hi sun re jar prēt bakhān triyā bhaj  
jai hai.

Putra, Kalitra, Sumitra, Sakhā eh bēg nikarō āis dai  
hai.

Bhaun, Bhandār, dhārūgarh jētak chbādat prān  
began kahai hai.

Chet re chet achet mahā pas Ant ki lār akelo hi  
jai hai.

English rendering :—

O; thou unthinking person, hear, ! thy wife will flee away when thou leavest thy body. Son, daughter, friends, and acquaintances,

will, all, say "Take him out forthwith."

Lands, treasures and fortresses, thou possessest, will pass to others when thou departest from the world.

Remember O great, unthinking fool, that thou wilt depart from here alone."

The following would give an index of his spiritual ecstasy:—

"Jin Jin Nám tibáro 'dhyā'ā dūkh pāp tin nikat na ā ā !"

"Jē jē aur dhīān ko 'dharī bahs bahs bādan te marī !"

"Na dhyān ān ko dharon na nām ān ughron !"

"Beant nām dhī-āi haun parm jót pās haun !"

"Tawak nam ratiang na ān mām matiāng !"

English rendering:—

"Sin and suffering approach not those that meditate on Thy Name !"

"Those who think of other things die quarrelling and wrangling !"

"No other thought do I entertain ; No other name do I repeat."

"The Endless Name alone I meditate upon ; the Eternal Light alone I enshrine in my heart !"

"In one name of Thee am I immersed ; no other belief do I cherish !"

The following extracts from his writings would show what he thought of people who led armies, conquered lands, built fortresses

and prided themselves on being great victors and commanders :—

Mate matang jaré jar sang anup utang surang  
sawaré.

Kòt turang kurang se kúdat paun ke gaun ko jat  
niwáre.

Bhári bhójan ke bhūp bhali bidh niawat sis na  
jat bicháre.

Ete bhae tau kahá bhui bhūpat ant kó náuge hi  
paon padháre !

Jit phirai sabb desh disbán ko bajat dhol mardang  
nigúre.

Gunjat gur gajan ke sundar hinsathi hai, rájhajáre.  
Binut bhawikh bhawán ke bhūpat kaun ginai nahi  
jat bicháre.

Sripat Sri Bhagwán bhaje bin ant ko ant ke dhám  
suháre.

English rendering :—

“ Men ride on tall decorated, lordly, fierce  
horses. ”

“ They run about on their steeds and leave  
even fierce wind behind them. ”

“ Countless mighty princes come and pay  
obeisance to them. ”

“ What, if princes soar so high they will  
depart naked after all. ”

“ They go about conquering many lands  
and countries with drums beating and trumpets  
blowing. ”

“ Their handsome elephants gaily deco-  
rated, roar like lions ” Their thousand steeds  
prance about and neigh.



Rulers of past, present, and future who can count? They can not be even conceived.

They meditated not on the name of the Eternal One and in the end they departed to the Land of the Dead!

Hundreds and thousands of such passages are interspersed over the whole of Guru Govind Singh's Granth. In the face of these how puerile looks the statement that Guru Govind Singh "dwarfed the unity of a religious sect into an instrument of political advancement." This reckless statement takes no cognizance of the whole trend of Sikh renaissance, when it would imply that the aim of Guru Govind Singh was to convert Baba Nanak's true men into mere soldiers.

To Sir Rabindra soldiers are necessarily hobgoblins! Bengal has yet to produce soldiers and I hope and pray that time may come when Bengal has its own soldiers to protect the honour of its hearths and homes. In the land to which Guru Govind Singh belonged, to which I have the honour to belong, a soldier is the beau ideal of the people. Our women consider themselves most lucky if they can get soldiers for their husbands. Our young damsels when assembled in groups and standing or sitting under trees, sing with accompaniments of their rough musical instruments "Man laga sipahe na!" (I have fallen in love with a soldier!). And they sigh for soldiers! Our wives, sisters and

daughters mostly produce soldiers, not quill drivers, penny-a-liners or throat-renders.

To resume the thread of my argument. There are soldiers and soldiers. Soldiers who raze, pillage and plunder and commit untold atrocities; and soldiers who, like Cromwell's Iron-sides, possessing all that can make them happy, risk their lives in chasing God's enemies, so that their people may live in peace. Such were Guru Govind Singh's soldiers. They were mostly quiet, devout, and peace-loving citizens, who earned their bread by peaceful occupations.

Guru Govind Singh never fought an aggressive fight. He never conquered any land and never enriched himself or his followers by booty. He armed his followers so that they might live unmolested and serve their God and their country in their own way. Their struggles against the ruling power of the day mostly resemble those of the English Dissenters in the days of the Reformation, rather than with those of men who go about in quest of territory or plunder.

Sir Rabindra is quite wrong when he thinks that "The liberation which Baba Nanak realized in his heart was not political liberty." The fact however, is that the Baba felt the political degradation of his people as keenly as did Guru Govind Singh. The following words, attributed to him, give a graphic account of his time :—

Kal káti rája kasá dharma pankh kar udriá !  
 Kúr, amáwas sat chandramá díse nábin kih charia !  
 English rendering :—

The age is of the sword ; rulers are butchers  
 and Virtue, taking wings, hath flown  
 away !

In the Amawas of untruth the moon of truth ap-  
 pareth not in the heavens !

Does this show indifference of Baba Nanak to the worldly welfare of his people ? It amounts, I should say, to shedding tears of blood. This alone is not what he did. He cursed the Turk rule and prophesied the advent of Guru Govind Singh who, he said, would come and put an end to it. And I dare say that, had not there been this clear, this emphatic condemnation of the Turk rule in Baba Nanak's writings, my faith in his goodness would have been rudely shaken.

The belief has unfortunately prevailed in our country, for ages past, that religious people need have nothing to do with the acts of the rulers, and their duty is simply to meditate on God's name and make others do so. It is this mistaken belief which has zapped our national life and made us what we are. God needs neither religion nor spirituality. It is man who needs these commodities. If these commodities are not requisitioned for the amelioration of man's lot, they had better not exist. There are some good people who are under the impression that their persons become

hallowed by repeating God's name; and this precludes the possibility of their services being requisitioned for the use of the state. If it lay with me I would make it criminal for such men, however high placed they might be, to enjoy luxury and live in the peace and quiet of home, when their lay brethren went to the front and received the baptism of fire. I would forcibly push them into the thick of the fight and make them listen to the music of the maxim guns instead of the chimes of the church bells or of the cymbals of the temples, if only to save them from public obloquy.

The trouble of Guru Govind Singh was that he was son of a Khashtya not of a Brahman. He could not look askance when Hindu and Sikh girls were forcibly removed to the harems of the Muslim nobility, when Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam, when Hindu temples were washed with the blood of cows and were either demolished or converted into mosques, when Hindus and Sikhs were carried into slavery and their property confiscated or plundered. All this drew tears from his eyes. Life under these circumstances was impossible. Like the blessed Christ, he laid down his life that God's people may live. His example was copied by thousands of his followers, and within a few decades after his ascension the Turk sway in the Punjab came to an end, and the Hindus and Sikhs here who had been trodden down for

centuries, breathed a sigh of relief. In this consummation there may be little to admire for uninformed writers in the remote Bengal. But I am sure to the brave races of the Punjab the name of Guru Govind Singh will continue to be dear for all time.

A Punjabi proverb says. "Jis tan lage so tan jâne." Only the heart that bleedeth feeleth. The truth of this proverb may well be illustrated by the case of Sir Rabindra Nath. Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore, the writer of the above paragraph in the year 1911, Babu Rabindra Nath Tagore, the great spiritualist and moralist, Babu Rabindra Nath, the prophet of the doctrine of non-resistance, Babu Rabindra Nath, the winner of the Nobel prize, a Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore, in the 1916th years of Lord Christ, appears a champion of the refractory Bengal lads who, the other day, beat an English professor of the Presidency College, Calcutta. An English translation of his writings in Bengalee appears in the *Modern Review* for April last, under the heading of "Indian students and western teachers." Leaving aside the rigmarole in which Sir Rabindra Nath endeavours to lay particular emphasis on the highly sensitive nature of Bengali lads, and the caustic language in which he anathematizes against the remedies, suggested by a Principal of a Mission College, to correct this over-sensitiveness; I crave indulgence of the reader to take a few excerpts from Sir Rabindra's own writings to show how, when time comes, even

the so-called saintly persons behave like ordinary mortals and take up cudgels on behalf of those who are dearly or nearly attached to them.

Writes Sir Rabindra :—

“ But those who, in their pride of greater knowledge or of social or racial position are ready to insult the students at every step, will never receive homage from them and so, in despair, they will attempt in vain to extort obedience and reverence by the help of stringent regulations and official myrmidons.....But if the student's own race or religion is insulted by the teacher, if the students know that for themselves there is no chance or justice, and for the professors of their own nationality no fair treatment, then they are bound to break out into impatience; and, *indeed, it would be a thousand pities if they did not.*” The italics are mine. Truly it has been said that, driven to desperation, even the worm turns. And we see that even the preacher of non-resistance, the man to whom true manliness consists in mere talking of religion and preaching it, who would avoid even the semblance of a quarrel, who, a few years back, poured the vials of his wrath on Guru Govind Singh for his taking up the sword and defying the iniquitous Moghal, now openly preaches defiance of authority!!! ”

And what is the fault of the foreign English ruler ? He does not forcibly convert the Bengali Hindus to his creed. He does not desecrate Bengali temples. He does not commit adultery on Bengali women. He does not take away Bengali lads and girls into slavery. What has he done then ? Shall I say what ? No, let Sir Rabindra answer himself. It is because "the European Professor does not look upon his vocation as that of a teacher. He feels himself also to be a king of the country. He suffers from the conviction that he has come out to do good. (Oh ! ) He does not always feel the necessity of controlling his tongue or his temper ! " O, what an interesting spectacle to see ! Sir Rabindra is not only not ashamed of his callousness towards the lot of his countrymen in the Punjab, he actually condemns the hero who gave up his life to ameliorate their condition. But when Bengali lads revolt against their foreign Professors and beat them he not only does not censure them for their grave insubordination ; he actually espouses their cause ! He talks of the Bengali lads' idea of self-respect, of the sudden and unexpected bursting of the irrepressible life of not turning the other cheek when struck by the Principal of a Mission College ! He says that " The Bengali students will never take themselves to be mere puppets or allow themselves to be unjustly coerced into submission. This attitude of mind has become a fact to-day. It is possible to treat it as a delusion ; it is possible to abuse it but

it is impossible to ignore it. By striking a blow at it you only give an opportunity of proving itself all the more true." He tells English rulers that if they want to win the affection of the Bengali lads they should not have recourse to the bastinado, they should take them into their laps and kiss them! He forgets that as a personage honoured by the officials, if not for any other consideration, his duty was to uphold official authority. He ignores the result of the commission appointed to investigate the causes of the fracas, the Commission which contained a couple of his own highly cultured countrymen, draws his own conclusions and openly suggests that the fracas was only the result of the arrogance of European Professors. The Government resolution traced the birth of this spirit of insubordination to the objectionable writings of the Bengali press. Sir Rabindra hails this spirit and blesses it! All this is a marvel of consistency. I need say nothing more.

As regards Sir Rabindra's statement that "To-day there is no spirit of progress amongst the Sikhs. They have crystallised into a small sect. Centuries have failed to produce a new spiritual teacher from amongst them", I may only say that like Christians and Mussalmans the Sikhs of Guru Govind Singh have got a Bible in their Garu Granth Sahib and like these people they have had and still have great Disciples who expound the spiritual truth embodied in their Bible. Geographical conditions



have necessitated the dissipation of a great deal of their energies in withstanding the inrush of the marauding hosts from the frontier and in helping to curb down those already settled in their midst; but still they retain enough of spirit and imagination and are thinking of squaring accounts with their so-called advanced countrymen. The soaring ambitions of their ancestors still inspire them. From men like Lord Curzon who saw little beauties in the Indians generally they have won the flattering appellation of a Nation of Heroes. Men who know their language and who attend any of their great congregations equally compliment their spiritual fervour and their devoutness.

In my next I shall show how little Sir Robindra Nath Tagore knows of Sikh history and how wrong are the inferences he draws from this little.

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## SIR RABINDRA NATH TAGORE ON THE SIKH GURUS.

by

SARIBZADA BHAGAT LAKSHMAN SINGH.

No. 2.

In my last article I endeavoured to show the absurdity of the idea that there was anything inherent in the word soldier that made it a term of obloquy. I showed that religion being intended for human weal, soldiers who protected mankind from internal or external troubles and made it possible for most men to live in peace, were pre-eminently honourable as

compared with men who wrote treatises on religion or moralized on it. I would crave the indulgence of the reader to dwell on this a little more; for I know from my study of history, and from my experience of life, that much of the disorganization in human society, which results in so much sin and suffering, is directly attributable to the divorcing of spirituality from humanity. Somehow the belief has prevailed that it is the body that is responsible for most of human ills and, therefore, salvation will come from afflictions caused to it; and the greater the bodily afflictions, the speedier will come salvation! Our blessed Gurus, from Baba Nanak downwards, have strongly reprobated these beliefs and practices, and have taught that the only way to attain salvation is clear thinking and clear acting accompanied, of course, with meditation and prayer. Indeed, this is the characteristic feature of Sikhism that differentiates it from Buddhism, Jainism, and the later Hindu religious systems, that have followed in the wake of them. Guru Govind Singh only improved upon these ideals. The times had changed and with them their requirements. Hymn singing, feasting, fanning and shampooing were not all that were needed. Men were wanted who could perform braver deeds and make greater sacrifices. Blood thirsty Turks and Pathans and licentious Mughals had made life unbearable. No one could pray to his God in his own way. No one's property was safe! Only hearts made of stone, or

raven-hearted poltroons whose end-all and be-all of life was self-indulgence, could look at this state of things unmoved. Guru Govind was made of a nobler stuff. He was love and sacrifice incarnate. Love was his life and love his religion. He could not repose in his retreat at Anandpore, when men and women of his own race and blood were being ravished and dishonoured and were weltering in blood. He felt that only an appeal to arms alone could ease the situation and he saw to it. He laid down his life ; so that it might be infused into the dead Hindus. At his beck and call hundreds and thousands of people offered themselves as sacrifice to uphold national honour !

So the blood of martyrs was the seed of the Khalsa Church ! Since then Sikhs have got healthier ideals and clearer conceptions of duty. Mostly unlettered and untaught, they are more susceptible to noble impulses than men who indulge in so much cant on the pulpit and on the platform, or newspaper scribblers or writers of brochures, whose patriotic instincts act only within the precincts of temples or lecturing places, or glow on the pages of books and periodicals. It is nothing short of impertinence for Bengali Babus, however literate or high placed, to pose as critics of men whom they are not constituted to understand. The lion and the fox are both nature's creation. There must be special purpose for which they exist. They are both denizens of the forest. Both are carnivorous. But they have little in

common when viewed ethically. Similarly, Bengalis have many admirable qualities of their own, and Sikhs have theirs; but, just as a fox can not appreciate the beauties in a lion, similarly it is impossible for Bengalis to correctly understand and paint the Sikhs. Notwithstanding, the world at large will go on judging both, as they deserve to be judged. It is idle to under rate either of them at the expense of the other.

Comparisons are always odious. I am sorry it should have been necessary to make them. But when men forget the ordinary rules of etiquette and talk of great and holy personages, without proper thought and enquiry, a little twisting by the tail, a process however unsightly, serves as a powerful corrective. If it is in the interests of mankind to segregate those that are a menace to its physical well-being, it is equally necessary to pull literary free lances by the ear; so that they may think a little and forbear from their occupation of making one race of men falling foul of the other.

The chief work of a Brahman, in ancient times, remembered with deserved pride, was to preside at a *yajna*. And what was a *yajna*? It was a sacrifice, performed when Rajput princes prepared to wage war on an enemy, or when they returned victorious after a fight with an enemy. The great Vashishta trained Rama and Lakshmana in the use of arms. The

equally renowned Dronacharya taught the Pandava brothers the art of war and himself died in the thick of the fight in the great war of Mahabharat. But the modern Brahman fights shy of even the name of war! Under his tutelage the Hindu races are wasting their energies in vain pursuits. Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore, though a Brahmo, must be, I think, as true a believer in caste as his co-religionists in the Punjab are, and must be, at least, in his heart of hearts, priding himself on his Brahman lineage. I wish he were equally proud of the self-respecting Rishis who blessed the brave sons of Ind and often led them to victory.

Truly it has been said, that a prophet is not honoured in his own country. We, in the Punjab, should not attach much importance to press notices of Sir Rabindra's achievements in the domain of letters, or to the valedictory addresses, presented to him, in this country or abroad, during his tour of self-advertisement. The fact that Bengalis of *bhadra* (respectable) class are offering themselves for enlistment in the regiment, the Government has permitted to be formed, shows, beyond all question or cavil, that Sir Rabindra's ideals do not appeal to the rising generation of his own countrymen of Bengal.

I am not a poet. I have rarely admired poets. I have looked upon poetry, when divorced from humanity, as the work of idlers, on

whose hands time hangs heavily, or who turn and twist human speech to serve their selfish ends. Hence a lot of prejudice has all along lingered in my mind against literary productions of a laboured style. And were it not for a Dante, a Milton, a Byron, a Kalidas, or a Viyasa whose hearts, like Guru Govind Singh's, pulsated with love for their fellow beings, whose sense of wrong was keen and who employed their art in rousing patriotism in people's breasts, I would have never cared to open a poetical work and cast a glance over its pages. I wish Sir Rabindra employed his poetical genius in rousing the same patriotic feeling in the breasts of young Bengalis and thus gave a proof of active loyalty to the Government, under whose aegis it has been possible for him and his family to live unmolested for so many generations, in full possession of enormous wealth ! No art is worth much if it is not employed to better man's lot. It would have much more redounded to the credit of Sir Rabindra if, instead of great pontiffs like the Ex.-Viceroy Lord Hardinge, and well-meaning Christian missionaries, like Rev. Andrews, he had found admirers from among young Bengal and had appealed to their Imagination.

I met a man 30 years ago, another 3 years ago, and a 3rd one three days back. All of them were known to be *pucca* men of the world. There was never an opportunity which they did not turn to their advantage. Their

close friends were their agents who managed their property, or lawyers and judges who disposed of and settled their disputes about property. But when there was a great gathering they stood up to harangue on peace and harmony! If there was a *mela* (Fair), they would make it a special point to deliver orations on peace and sympathy! They would even go so far as to incur a bit of expense in printing and publishing leaflets on national harmony! I remember men took these people to be veritable *Devatas*. Some of them even became their *chelas*. But I was better circumstanced. I could watch these men at a close range and see through their designs, a process which enabled me to have a hearty laugh at their cleverness and simultaneously breathed a heavy sigh at the credulity of mass of my countrymen. I hope my brother Sikhs will, like me, learn to rate the idle critics of their great Guru Govind Singh at their proper worth and will constantly keep before their eyes the high ideals of duty, chalked out for them. May the prayer,

“ Degh Tegh fateh ” !

continue to go forth from all Sikh hearts! May the day never come when Guru Govind Singh's Sikhs will idle away their time and opportunities, when there is a hearth to protect, when a girl cries for help against her ravisher, or when men in need require to be taken by the hand!

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# PROFESSOR JADU NATH SIRCAR ON THE SIKH GURUS.

*By Sahibzada Bhagat Lakkshman  
Singh, F. R. S. A. (LONDON).*

No. 1.

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In my reply to Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore's uninformed criticism of Guru Govind Singh's share in the moulding of the Sikhs, I regretted that a writer who, otherwise so learned and enlightened, should have showed so little reverence and considerateness when writing of a great and holy personage like Guru Govind Singh. It is no excuse to say that most English writers have written likewise and have blundered and that, this being the case, Sir Rabindra is in good company. I do not think so. Western writers may have this excuse to plead that they are not Indians and, with all their knowledge, they can not enter into the spirit of the people; but no well-brought up Indian ought to seek shelter under such puerile excuses. All serious writings should be the result of careful research. Men wanting in resource ought not to venture on such undertakings.

In the excerpt which formed the basis of my criticism, Sir Rabindra Nath only took a wrong view of the 10th Guru's mission. He has refrained from indulging in a language



which might savour of ridicule or effrontery. A man of Sir Rabiindra's scholarship and learning, I confess, could not stoop so low as that.

No such restraint governs the mind of Mr. Jadu Nath Sircar Professor. Judging from his writings he appears to be the prototype of an out and out Punjab Dayanandi. I am told that what has appeared from his pen in the "Modern Review" forms part of his work on Aurangzeb, consisting of several volumes. I am also told that this work is a University text and that he has spent on it 15 years' labour. All this is very good; but I feel constrained to remark that if Professor Sircar has dealt with Aurangzeb, as he has done with Guru Govind Singh, his portrait of Aurangzeb will be a mere creation of his imagination, not a real representation.

But I am digressing. I was saying that Professor Sircar seems to have been made after the model of a Punjab Daya Nandi. Like his prototype here, his concepts of things assume quite a contorted form. The mother of pearl drinks the dew drop, is forthwith conceived and brings forth a jewel. The cobra drinks the same drop and pours forth every one knows what. The late Mr. Macauliffe wrote a book and won our admiration and respect. Professor Jadu Nath takes extracts from the same book and provokes and insults us. The fault lies not with those extracts. There is nothing in them

intrinsically unsound or malodorous. It is the interpretation that errs. Before I take up, one by one, the statements of Mr. Jadu Nath Sircar Professor, in which he has so stupidly bungled and show how puerile his reasoning is, I crave permission of the reader to take an excerpt from page 387 column 2 of his paper in the "Modern Review" for April last :—

"Nanak," says the Professor, "drew round himself a band of earnest worshipers, and in time they *solidified into a sect.* But his original intention was to save all souls without distinction and not found a narrow brotherhood with its peculiar dress marks, doctrines, form of worship and scriptures. He acknowledged no Gura save God and no worship except the practice of virtue. Even his hymns were mostly adapted from the sacred songs left behind by the monotheistic reformers of the past, and had nothing distinctive, nothing sectarian about them.

The italics are mine. The statement made in this extract bears family resemblance to those that we are accustomed to hear from the mouths of our Bengalised brothers,—I mean our Brahmo friends. As a red rag is to a bull, so is the word sectarian to a Brahmo. There is nothing which he abhors so much, nothing which frightens him so much. It was, perhaps last year, or the year before last, that I read a very interesting article on Guru Govind Singh's mission from the pen of Pandita Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, the patriotic and public-

spirited wife of Pandit Ram Bhaj Datt Chaudari, a friend of my boyhood. But I felt a bit disappointed when I read at the conclusion of the paper this stale reasoning of Guru Nanak's church having been narrowed down to a sect. A feeling of pity or regret came over my mind when I saw how easily persons of such breeding and culture allowed themselves to be possessed by hobgoblins of their own creation. What is in the word 'sect,' pray, which should scare or put out any one? Is not Brahmo church, to which the Tagores belong and to which Professor Jadu Nath presumably belongs, a sect in all its essentials? Has it no form of worship, no scripture, no doctrine, no peculiar dress and no Guru? What position do our friends assign to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devindra Nath Tagore and Babu Keshub Chandra Sen in their hearts if not in their Church? The wonder is these critics are cabined, cribbed and confined in the narrowness of their small dingy dark minds from which they seem to purposely shut out light and they think they are, like the lark, soaring in the heavens in the midst of refulgent clouds!

If we were to take them at their word, they appear to be believers in a sort of spiritual vagrancy, with nothing to check, nothing to control it. If our friends seriously believe in these beliefs why do they not translate them into their every day life in all their concerns? Why live with one's wife and children, brothers and sisters? Why not wander over the four

corners of the world and have unrestrained enjoyment of God's bounties all over the globe? If they have homes, if they love their wives and children, brothers and sisters, as they love no one else, what harm do they see in other people's having a spiritual home of their own, where they may meet their brothers in faith and exchange courtesies with them, where they may gladden their hearts and their minds by reading or hearing recitations from the word of their great holy guides? For this meeting of fellow-thinkers, fellow-believers, for the satiation of their spiritual cravings, a home is always necessary and that home always and everywhere ultimately becomes a sect or a church, by whatever name you may call it.

It is quite wrong to say that Baba Nanak did not intend to "found a narrow brotherhood with its peculiar dress, marks, doctrines, form of worship and scriptures." On the contrary he had all these. His dress was peculiar, of a certain well-defined, distinctive type, which all his disciples loved to copy. His doctrines were distinctive and his form of worship distinctive. Men who have ever read 'Asa-di Var' will at once agree with me, when I say, that he ruthlessly exposed the fallacious beliefs and practices prevalent in his age and times. For his scripture he had hymns of his own composition, which were free from the errors he took so great pains to point out, and which were later on, incorporated in the Ad Granth by Guru Arjan, his 5th successor.

in the "guddee". Again it is quite true that he "acknowledged no Guru save God;" but this did not preclude him from ordaining Angad as his successor in the Gurudom. And I fail to see what else he could have done. It would have been cruel to leave his flock without a loving guide and protector. No one ever did such a thing before or after him in this country. In fact, all the world over, great leaders have taken care to see that the churches established by them had pontiffs to direct and control them. Even the great thinkers of antiquity such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who did not found any sect or church, could not do without followers who had beliefs of their own, which in time were reduced to well-defined distinctive codes and came to be known as Greek schools of Philosophy.

Again it is quite wrong to say that even Baba Nanak's "hymns were mostly adapted from the sacred songs left behind by the monotheistic reformers of the past and had nothing distinctive, nothing sectarian about them." All this is gibberish and meaningless gabble, which we are accustomed to hear from the lips of our Brahmo friends over here, and which Baba Nanak's own words belie. Says he :

Jaisi main áve khasma ki báni

Taisra karin gyan ve Lalo.

English rendering :—

As the Lord's word cometh to me

So I interpret it, O'Lalo.

Here Baba Nanak claims to be an inspired teacher. There may be a resemblance between his word and that of other great teachers; but it is absurd to suppose that he copied from any body's work. This would be an insult to Baba Nanak's divine culture and attainments.

I admit our Faith is eclectic; but our eclecticism is different from Bengali or what is the same thing, from Brahmo eclecticism. Guru Nanak's word includes all that is good in other religious systems of the world; but the contradictory of this proposition is not true.

Our love, again, is different from their love. We hold our lives in our hands for the sake of others. Their *Bande Mataram* song, sung from the pulpit and the platform and from their high class operas, with so much flourish, has not, till now, given even 3 hundred men to the much talked of Bengali Double Company to fight under the Union Jack, that protects their hearths and homes. Our men have died and are dying in thousands for our beloved King-Emperor.

A personal anecdote would show the value of this boasted belief in universal brotherhood of our Brahmo friends. I was compelled to leave the Rawalpindi Mission School and join the Government High School, Lahore, in the year 1882. I brought letters of introduction to the late Dr. Newton, whose blessed

memory the hostel attached to the Forman Christian College so nobly commemorates, to the late Babu Navin Chandra Rai, the highly learned President of the Brahmo Samaj, to the late Lala Sain Das, who was father of the Lahore Arya Samaj, so to say, for a whole life-time, to the late Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad, of immortal fame, at whose feet, later, I had the privilege to sit and drink from the fountain of knowledge, embodied in the immortal works of Firdausi, Nizami, and other great Persian writers. Thus, even when I was in my teens, I knew and came in frequent contact with the best that was in Lahore Society, European and Indian. Books of all sorts were my passion even when I was much younger. Improved opportunities in Lahore made me actually a literary gormandizer. Not much time elapsed before I acquired the habit of writing on stray subjects. These manuscripts I took, every now and then, to journalists interested in religious and social reform. These good people naturally came to have a liking for me. One of them a Brahmo, smooth-tongued, sweet-mannered, particularly professed great love for me. For 8 years or so I was a frequent visitor at his house. It took me long to go to him. The heat of the sun oppressed me and made me feel thirsty. The dirty lanes through which I had to pass to reach his small but well-kept house, with my nose closed, I still remember. But when I rushed upstairs

and seated myself in his prayer room on the uppermost storey, which was very neat, with a red floor and white walls, which seemed all ablaze with light, as the morning Sun peeped through the open door and the windows, when my friend greeted me with a smile from his face which was red as a pomegranate and which had rows of teeth which shone like pearls, and when he readily received my manuscripts for publication in his paper, I felt more than compensated, though till this time, I remember, that he never offered me even a glass of water. Once this estimable person, when I was sitting with him in a moment of enthusiasm, addressed me by the endearing term of 'brother.' I stared into his face with a bewildered look and then I told him I had two brothers in Rawalpindi, and that he certainly was not my brother and could not be so. Both of my brothers were young graduates of great culture and high calibre. One of them worshipped me as if he was my disciple and I his Guru. He was so very careful in his duty to me that when he became too weak to show respect to before he died, he would make me place my foot on his bed so that he might rest his head on it and receive my blessings. The other loved me as few would love. Whenever I cried with pain he cried. Whenever I fell ill, he became disconsolate and attended on me with the greatest care. When, for years, I had no work and no source of income, he took delight



in feeding me and in looking after me. Both he and his wife would sit with me, place dainty dishes before me and enjoy the sight of my partaking of the delicious foods, as if I was a nursling. When I called at his house, he would respond in the sweetest of tones and would run down to lead me up; although he was a busy lawyer and was always surrounded by importunate clients and by other men who sought him in quest of spiritual knowledge, and his time was not his own. And when he fell ill and was dying, I wished and I prayed that, as it pleased the great God to listen to Babar's prayer and transfer Humayun's malady to him, I might be similarly fortunate in obtaining for my dearly beloved, noble, brother a longer lease of life, in lieu of mine. But the great Dispenser willed it differently and my prayer was not heard. It is a decade since he parted from me; but even now, when walking over fields and roads, away from the associations of our home, I call out to him and enquire why he has left me here alone. At night he visits me, in my dreams very often, when my heart and soul become filled with rapturous delight. A brother to be a real brother should be such a brother. This is what I understand the term brother to mean. Such an ideal of brotherhood would convey a fairly good idea of Sikhs or more particularly of Khalsa brotherhood; whose beliefs, ways and practices are not alike and whose Dispensations differ as Judaism differs from Christia-

nity. The Khalsa Church is not exclusive. All are welcome within its fold. Khalsa brotherhood is not a brotherhood of men who love to talk of love and who scrupulously keep away from all that excites and pains. It is a congregation of men whose highest ideal is not fraternization, but self-annihilation. A Khalsa is not a self-opiniated, self-contained individual. He is a worshipper whose highest bliss is to lose himself in the object of his love, as a moth irresistibly plunges into the dazzling flame and burns itself.

PROFESSOR JADU NATH SIRCAR

ON THE SIKH GURUS.

No. 2.

*By Sahibzada Bhagat Lakshman Singh*

F. R. S. A. (LONDON.)

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“This liberality of mind, devotion to the essence of religion and contempt for wealth and power,” says Professor Jadu Nath, “continued to mark the Sikh Gurus throughout the 16th century from Nanak to Arjan, the 5th Guru. Their saintly lives won the reverence of the Mughal Emperors and they had no quarrel either with Islam or the State. Before the reign of Aurangzebe the Sikhs

were never persecuted on religious grounds and their collision with the Mughal Government which began in Jehangir's time was due entirely to *secular* causes and the change in the character of the Gurus was solely responsible for it. Nanak had no Guru save God and his two immediate successors were chosen for superior character only. But after the 3rd Guru the headship of the church became hereditary. The Guru was credited with superhuman powers; he was invested with royal pomp and man worship began to infect the Sikhs. When boys of nine and even five years (like Govind Rai and Harkishan respectively) were accepted as spiritual leaders; it was clear that the Guru had ceased to be regarded as a human teacher and was held to be born with supernatural powers like an incarnation of God, whose acts could not be judged by the standard of human reason".

In my paper No. 1, published in the "Sikh Review" I have dwelt at length on the liberality of mind of Baba Nanak, as that blessed teacher possessed and as attributed to him by Babu Jadu Nath. I explained therein that though Baba Nanak's church was a cosmic church in whose fold all men were welcome, there was nothing in his writings which would support the contention that he looked upon wealth and power with contempt, or that he was indifferent to abuses in current beliefs and practices and that he extended his arms to all alike disregarding of their beliefs and practices.

He would have made an Augean stable of his church had he done so. No man did this before or after him. My conception of Baba Nanak is that he loved God more than anything else. And if he loved men it was those whom he believed to be lovers of God, or capable of loving God. Other peoples' beliefs and practices he ruthlessly assailed. Readers of 'Asa-di-Var' would readily understand what I mean when I say this. In a previous paper I said that Baba Nanak shed tears of blood when he saw his people cruelly treated by the barbarian rulers of his time. Had it been physically possible for him, I am sure, he would have, like the later Sodhi Gurus, chastised the maldoers of his time; but it was not given to him to do so. His three immediate successors, it may be safely presumed, were not better circumstanced in this respect. Mussalman rule in India, even in the best of its days, has never been an undisturbed era of peace. Even the best of Mussalman rulers, the Great Akbar, was engaged in a perpetual war all his life. The peace and liberty of speech and action, that we now enjoy, was not known in his time even. He was hated by all orthodox Mussalmans for his liberal tendencies. So what we regard as Akbar's good parts were looked upon by his powerful co-religionists all over India as eccentricities and idiosyncracies of an heretic. It does not, therefore, require much effort to imagine that Akbar's policy could not have appreciably improved the lot

of the oppressed Hindus at a distance from the capital. The best of the Mughal rulers had a special fondness for wine and woman. The several Pathan and Mughal Governors, throughout the country, were altogether given to these pursuits. Their raids into surrounding districts were prompted not by the lust for conquest, but by the lust for women. Then again, at no time the fanatical Mussalman priest or Mulla was idle in his proselytizing propoganda. He has always been a powerful lever in the matter of Mussalman ascendancy. His close and intimate contact with young Hindu lads and lasses easily enabled him to actively join in the intrigues for their abduction or for their conversion to his creed. So at no time in the history of Mussalman rule Hindus or Sikhs could enjoy peace. All over India where Mussalman influence was in ascendancy the same tragedies were enacted from day to day. I belong to a "Mussalman ilaqa." Abduction of Hindu or Sikh girls and boys was an ordinary phenomena during the days of my boyhood. Even now such cases are not rare. In trans-India parts, where Hindus form an infinitesimally small number, petty Khans and Pathan Sardars have Hindu or Sikh girls as their wives or concubines. And the male relatives of these women do not consider there is any derogatoriness in serving these petty chiefs as accountants or Diwans.

It will be urged that there is no harm in this fusion of Pathan and Hindu blood. Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan, all encouraged this practice. But this sort of concubinage was favored neither in the time of Akbar, Shahjahan, or Jehangir, nor even now by all people. The great house of Udeypore princes chose to face death or extinction rather than allow this concupiscence. It is, therefore, absurd to suppose that successors of Baba Nanak down to the 4th Guru had no quarrel with the Mughal rulers of their time. True it is that history is silent on these matters. But who in this country ever wrote a history of the people? Who writes it now? I would, rather, suppose that Sikh Gurus and their followers saw all these things; but like the ascetics of old they looked upon the suffering entailed by the immoral Mussalman rulers of their times as a divine visitation or a curse which could be removed only when the Divinity Himself willed it. This seems to have been the attitude of the Sikh Gurus until, as the common saying goes, things began to mend when they were at their worst. Guru Arjan was cruelly martyred by a combination of Hindu and Mussalman officials and not a tear was shed by any one. Then it was that Guru Har Govind took up the sword. You may call it a revenge, you may call it a surrender of principles on which Nanak founded his church or anything you please. But we do not think so. Guru Har Govind introduced the change to infuse into his followers the spirit of

resistance and the capacity to punish. Babu Jadu Nath is living in an age when this function, i. e., this resistance is performed by the British Government and he is in the possession of a peaceful home. This was not the case in the time of Guru Har Govind. If there was law it was for the Mussalmans and not for the Hindus and Sikhs. Those had to shift for themselves as best as they might. Even the most innocent of animals show a little of spirit when brought to bay. Even the lowest vermins possess an instinct of self-preservation. It was for self-preservation that Guru Har Govind changed the venue of Baba Nanak's Sikhism a little. I say a little, because at no time in Sikh history any of the Sikh Gurus fought an aggressive fight. Show me the man who has not wished to remain in the undisturbed possession of his home. Show me the spiritualist whose wife and children were forcibly taken away from him for immoral purposes but he did not feel or utter a cry of pain. Show me the man who beheld his parent bayoneted or gibbeted ; but he did not feel the impulse of what you call revenge. If there was such a person he was a monstrosity, not a human being.

This change of venue in Sikhism, as introduced by Guru Har Govind, has lent lustre and nobility to the Sikh names. The beginning of this era in Sikh histrey is the birth of heroism and martyrdom, True it is that after Guru Ram Dass all the Gurus were Sodhis and boys of nine and five were accepted as spiritual

leaders ; but it is not true to say that Guruship ever became hereditary. There was always a selection and the selection was always a happy one. In the case of the boy Gurus the selection was the happiest. Babu Jadu Nath apparently sees little beauty in supernaturalism ; but Sikh history brims with stories of the ennobling influence of the child Guru, Guru Harkrishna. His one act the nomination of Guru Teg Bahadur, as his successor, is enough to crown him with far-seeing wisdom which can not be overrated, because it savours of the miraculous and can not be judged by Professor Jadu Nath's "standard of human reason." We only know that with the advent of Guru Teg Bahadur and another boy Guru, the illustrious Guru Govind Singh, ushers in an era of all that is noble in our history, an era which the greatest and the noblest throughout the world love to admire and whose mere thought stirs up in us the purest instincts and aspirations and rejuvenates us into the noblest of manhood. This is enough to us.

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PROF. JADU NATH SIRCAR  
AND  
THE SIKH GURUS

(BY SAHIBZADA BHAGAT LAKHSHMAN SINGH  
F. R. S. A., M. R. A. S., (London).

No. 3.

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In this paper I shall deal with Mr. Jadu Nath Sircar's extracts and I shall show how egregious are the errors he makes in their manipulation.  
Says he :—

“ Under Arjun, the 5th Guru, the number of converts greatly increased and with them the Guru's income” and he quotes from Mr. Macauliffe, an excerpt from a contemporary Muslim writer who said of the Guru that ‘The Emperor Akbar and the kings bow before him. Wealth ever cometh to him” and he continues “the royal state and retinue of this Guru were so great that even a Chancellor (Diwan) of the empire considered the Guru's son a desirable match for his daughter ; but the Guru scornfully declined the alliance.” And as if this portrait was not sufficient to provoke the ire of people, spiritually inclined, the good professor adds “ with the business instinct of a Khatri (petty-trader) Guru Arjuna organized a permanent source of income. A band of agents were stationed in every city, from Kabul to Dacca, Wherever there was a Sikh, to

collect the offerings and tithes of the faithful and this spiritual tribute, so far as it escaped speculation by the agents, reached the central treasury at Amritsar." It is very kind of the Professor that though he has evidently found fault with Guru Arjun Devji for his organizing the revenues of the Sikh church, he has not suggested that the Guru himself did away with these revenues and used them for his own aggrandisement. But the insult is there—the allusion to the business instincts of the caste to which the Guru belonged and the insinuation that the revenues were diverted to channels other than those to which Baba Nanak and his three immediate successors would have employed them. Apparently to Mr Jadu Nath Sircar, Professor, money is a thing that pollutes and contaminates. His ideal spiritualist is one who would give no thought to the covering of his nakedness or to the feeding of his body. He has simply to seat himself in a devotional posture close his eyes and apply his mind to contemplation, and to leave all else to chance. I have heard of people miraculously fed and clothed. I have read of beings like the famous Qais of the fables, sitting in a cosy corner of a far-off forest, with only the picture of Laila in his mind and her name on his lip, until a tree grew on his head in whose branches nature's songsters built their nests, and under whose shade the wolf and the hyena pranced about playfully, unnoticed by Qais who was the centre of attraction. But all these fanciful word-

pictures relate to the domain of romance. They are not historical truths. In vain I look for the ideal spiritualist who has real aversion for gold and the things gold can purchase. I would rather say that men who discard wealth generally turn out to be most greedy. They start with penances and end with the assumption of more than regal powers and display of all the paraphernalia of royalty. Our own benighted community stands conspicuous in this respect. It has, for its religious priceptors hordes of men who dress themselves in coarse cloth, but who would consider it an insult if they are not paid 2nd or 1st class tickets for journeys by rail, or are not carried in palanquins from place to place, in gorgeous array, and are not fed in a right royal style. In fact if there is any one who has pulled down man from his God-given pedestal of manhood and has made a contemptible, demented idiot of him, it is these spiritualists, who, professing contempt for the world, rob man of all that gives comfort to the body and happiness to the mind, and love to see him reduced to the state of a mere atrophied creature with no will or opinion of his own. To me nothing is more heart-rending than the sight of my benighted fellow beings, who follow these spiritual impostors, deprive their wives and children and those dependent on them, of the valuables they possess and surrender themselves and their belongings for the sake of the *ignis fatuus* of spiritualism that, like the boa-constrictor, slyly drags them into its coils,

breaks them up into a mass of jelly and then drinks their blood.

When writing the paper under notice, Babu Jadu Nath seems to have been enjoying the siesta of an opium eater. In the excerpts, above given, he openly finds fault with Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji for his organizing a permanent source of income ; but, in the next breath, he indulges in fulsome praise of the Guru and says that " the Guru was a lover of peace and humility and devoted himself to consolidating the church. He completed the two sacred tanks at Amritsar, and built the first temple for enshrining the Holy Book (Granth), drew up a scheme for daily religious services for the Sikhs and gave the final shape to their scriptures". But as if afraid of being charged with passing a discriminating judgment he adroitly adds. "At the very end of his career, Arjun made the sole mistake of his life. *Moved by compassion and entreaty*, in a weak moment, he blessed the banners of Khusru, the rival of Jehangir, for the Moghal throne, and even gave money help to that prince. On the defeat of the pretender, Jehangir fined the Guru two lacs of rupees for his disloyalty to the King *de jure*. The Sikhs were willing to subscribe the amount, but *the man of God* forbade them saying. "Whatever money I have is for the poor, the friendless and the stranger" ' He regarded the fine as unjust imposition, refused to pay it and stoically endured imprisonment and torture, which were

the usual punishments of revenue defaulters in those days. This was clearly not a case of religious prosecution ; but merely the customary punishment of a *political offender*." The italics are mine. Rarely, if ever, in life, I have come across a writing so frivolous and an argument so flimsy. And I feel ashamed that a countryman of mine, with Hindu blood running in his veins, should have produced this balderdash to caricature a saint whose son, grandson and great-grandson broke down the rule of the licentious and cruel Turks and Moghals, at the sacrifice of their lives and christened the country of their birth as " the land of heroes," to quote the words of the brilliant Lord Curzon, our late Viceroy—heroes who were not only self respecting, but self-sacrificing, at the mere mention of whose names the great Mussalman potentates, whose life's work was to commit adultery on Hindu and Sikh girls and who forcibly converted Hindus and Sikhs to Islam, shook on their thrones. It is a pity that a writing such as this should have been allowed insertion in an otherwise respectable journal and not a word of protest should have been raised in enlightened Bengal.

But I am digressing. Where was the mistake. I ask, in organizing a " permanent source of income " if the proceeds went to the erection of a temple of God, or in helping " the poor, the friendless or the stranger " ? Under what code of morality Guru Arjan can

be said to have been mistaken in helping Khusru against Jehangir? What mattered it to the Guru whether Khusru ruled Delhi or his father Jehangir? Giving shelter to a friendless man may be a mistake in the opinion of Mr. Jadu Nath Professor; but brave individuals and communities do not believe this. I really belong to the frontier. My ancestral village, Serai Saleh, in the district of Hazara, stands on the southern bank of the Daur, a tributary of the Indus into which it pours its waters as it emerges from the lower range of the Hindu Kush mountains. From that spot hundreds of miles further up, down to the southern borders of Beluchistan to the west of the Indus, live countless tribes of Pathans, in various grades of civilization. They are all lawless more or less; but they recognise one law—the law of hospitality. A Pathan of a good stock will never refuse shelter, even to his own foe, and would rather sacrifice his own life and that of his nearest and dearest in this world than surrender the refugee. Savage Pathans, living further west, are more keen in their sense of honour.

I crave the reader's indulgence to relate in this connection a few personal reminiscences by way of contrast. I was a lad of 13 when I went on pilgrimage to Hardwar accompanied by my dear parents and grand parents and an aunt. At that time Hardwar was not connected with Saharanpore by rail. So we hired 2 *ekkas*

at Saharanpore and proceeded to our destination. From Rawalpindi to Saharanpore the journey to me was a time of trial. Bread could not be had on the way. My cousins who were being educated in the Government College Lahore came to see us at the railway station. My dearly beloved cousin, Bhagat Naranjan Dass, M. A. Senior Judge (retired), now a days Judicial Minister Alwar, brought Surjan Singh Halwai's *Kachoris*, a famous dainty of Lahore for many years. They might have been good when warm, but when presented to us they were tough like the sole of an English shoe. I hesitated to eat them, but when my dear cousin persisted in praise of them I bolted them down my throat. I never knew that the whole journey would be through a breadless country. At Amritsar, Jallundur, Phillour, Rajpura, Ambala and Saharanpore the unwelcome sound of Puri Kichori, jarred on my ears. I longed for the sight of bread. My dear father decided to halt at a big village, a few miles this side of Roorkee when the sun was about to set, and it was thought unsafe to proceed on the journey. We rented a shop for a night's stay. My delight may be imagined when I saw my beloved grandmother, of blessed memory, preparing to cook food for us and bake bread. I was a man of all work in the family and even at that age I took delight in serving. At the beck and call of my relatives and their friends I would go any where and do anything and nothing was more precious to me than an app-

roving nod or a smile on their faces. I was sent to fetch a brass pan from an Halwai opposite. The man refused to lend it to me, unless he was paid a few pice by way of rent. I felt quite shocked at this and regretted father should have brought me to a land inhabited by a man like that. Well, we accomodated the man as best as we could and proceeded on our journey next morning. At Hardwar my experience was not happier. My people went out to see various sights and left me behind to guard our things. Our place of sonjourn was quite adjacent to Har-ki-Pauri. One evening a tall Sikh, bent under the weight of years, came to the sacred place accompanied by a young and handsome clean-shaven Panda. He had brought the ashes of some dear relative and to throw these in the sacred Ganges, he had hired the aforesaid Panda. When the ceremony was over, he offered the Panda a four anna piece. The man wanted more; but the old man had nothing to give. The blackgaurd of the Panda thereupon took hold of the old Sikh, beat him with shoes and insulted him with coarse abuses. The sight was unbearable. Forthwith like a young tiger I rushed at the man, caught him by the legs, administered to him a few blows, a tiny thing though I was. My example was followed by a few other Punjabee pilgrims and thus a regular riot ensued which was soon quelled with the help of the police. In the *melee* I got a few bruises whose marks still adorn my body.



Fourteen years later, I was a petty school master in a town in the Attock District. Once with two companions of my age, I went on an excursion to Zeda, a village on the other side of the Indus, in the Swabi Tahsil of the Peshawar District. It was late in the night when we reached the village. According to the practice of the country, our arrival was reported to the Khan of the village, an uncle of Khan Abdul Ghafur Khan, a Sessions Judge somewhere in this province. He came out forthwith to receive us and accorded us a hearty welcome, with open arms, as if he was Joseph, ruling over the land of the Pharos, and we were his own famished brothers, come from Judea to purchase corn. A hearty repast was ordered and served to us. Next morning my presence in the village was made known to the Hindu residents. Most of them were disciples of my grandfather's elder brother and, although I was not a direct lineal descendant of their Guru, these good people took me to a temple, showered flowers and Patasas on me and presented me money offerings, which I stoutly refused to accept, feasted us right royally and escorted us in procession with the accompaniment of music to the place where our boat was waiting for us.

Twelve years later, when I was holding no office, and had no position, I was compelled to ask a Sikh Sadhu to dinner at my house in Rawalpindi. This good man loved to have

with him a regular troupe of Sadhus about 30 in number. But when he went out for dinner, a regular company of about 70 strong and well-built men followed him. I had ordered food to be provided for a 100 men. But when dinner time came about 130 men presented themselves at my door and sought admission which was refused. When the matter came to the knowledge of my principal guest, he forth with ordered the doors to be flung open and thus every one was admitted indiscriminately. Helplessly I communicated my trouble to a lady of an adjoining house. She did not take long to understand me. Only 15 minutes after I saw more than a dozen women enter my house with food more than sufficient for the whole troupe of the Sadhus. How this was done I do not accurately know till now.

So there are men and men. How radically they differ in their ways and their ideas? Evidently there is something peculiar in the land that gives them birth and lends colour to their fibre. Born and brought up in the brave land of the Pathans, men become brave and chivalrous. At and near Hardwar they turn out to be prototypes of the Bannya who would not lend us a sauce-pan without payment of money and of the Panda who shoebeat a fellow-being; because he was too poor to pay

what was demanded. The famous Sarwan, who carried his aged and blind parents on a *Bahngi*, from place to place and served them, as no one did before or after him, arriving somewhere near the plains of Panipat, asked for wages from his parents for having served them so long and faithfully. The good people attributed this delinquency of their noble son to something in the nature of the land they were brought to. And rightly too. Once out of the land, Sarwan, with eyes full of tears, prostrated himself at the feet of his parents and sought their blessings.

There must be something in the place of birth of Mr. Jadu Nath Sircar Professor that makes him so callous. For my part I am proud that I belong to the corner of my great country the people of which, with all their sins, still believe in the law of hospitality. No man is more honoured and appeals more to our imagination than the one whose door is always open to receive the poor and the stranger. The elderly matron of our households accords them a hearty welcome with such heart-catching expressions.

“Main Sadqe jáwán, main qurbán jáwán.”

“I am an offering unto thee! I am a sacrifice unto thee.”

To come to the learned Professor's pronouncement that Guru Arjan met his sad end

not as a result of religious persecution ; but as an "ordinary political offender." Be it so, though our annals give a different story. The fact is there that the Guru met a violent end. This excited indignation. Guru Hargovind, Guru Arjan's son, interested himself in the chastisement of the evil doers, whose nefarious doings had culminated in this tragic occurrence. There was a revulsion of public feeling in Guru Hargovind's favour. Authors of the iniquity were brought to book, and Turk rule in the Punjab came to an end, in a few generations. This is an object lesson to all evil doers who tread roughshod over other people's feelings.

Men in power, all the world over, are, with a few honourable exceptions, very reluctant to part with their authority. They dub their opponents with various queer names such as "political offenders," "agitators," "sedition-mongers," and so forth. Malcontents are not tolerated. Their heads are chopped off like those of poppies, or they are pilloried, hanged and quartered. But the authors of these outrageous deeds do not escape divine retribution. The effects of their crimes redound on them or on their descendants with redoubled force and they seal their own doom. The great and the mighty all have their day. Says Guru Govind Singh :—

Dará se dilisar, Daryodhan se mandhári  
Bhog bhog Bhum ant bhum men milat hain.

“ Lords of Delhi, like Dara, and haughty proud men like Daryodhan, revel in worldly enjoyments; but finally they are all reduced to the dust.”

Guru Aajan might have been, an ordinary political offender in the opinion of Professor Jadu Nath Sircar; and he might have been rightly punished for his offence; but the Sikhs and the Hindus of the Punjab generally, from amongst whom converts to Sikhism have been so far recruited, do not believe this, I am glad to say. They look upon the Guru as beau-ideal of all that is good and noble, as the first martyr who made the Sodhi name so pre-eminent, for all time, as father of the saintly Guru Tegh Bahadur, the second Sikh martyred Guru, as grandfather of Guru Gobind Singh, the 3rd martyred Guru and great-grandfather of the four martyred princes Ajit Singh, Jujharr Singh, Zorawar Singh, and Fateh Singh. Guru Arjan's name in the Punjab is one to conjure with. The famous bards, Satta and Balwant, sang truly when addressing the Guru, they said :—

Tudh dithe Sodhi Padshah, mail janam  
janam di katiye !

(The mere sight of thee, O, Sodhi Padshah  
washeth away sins of countless births!!!)

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## No. 4.

I shall discuss in a few words Professor Jadu Nath Sircar's insinuation of moral laxity in some of the Gurus, based on his assertion that the Gurus married more wives than one. Firstly it is not true that all the Gurus contracted such marriages. In one or two cases 2nd or 3rd marriages are said to have been arranged by elderly matrons of the households of the Gurus, during the latters' childhood or boyhood when they could not think or act for themselves. Hindu law governed the Sikhs then as now. They have no code of their own. The responsibility for giving more wives, if such a thing did take place, lay with their Hindu "Biradari". I say this hypothetically; for there are men, for whose opinion I have the highest respect and who can speak with authority, who do not give credence to these idle tales and who hold that no Guru had more wives than one. Polygamous marriages can not be rightly defended; but I shall say that in well-constituted homes they have proved ideally the best. Raja Dasrath had 4. wives; but the sons they gave birth to were Rama and Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughan, men of undying fame. Pando had two wives, but the world has not produced many men braver, more truthful and more honourable than Yudhishtira, Arjan, Bhim, Nakul and Sahdev. Lord Krishna, the premier god of our Hindu brethren, whom

they assign the position of the Deity himself, had sixteen wives, leaving aside thousands of Brij damsels who are believed to have been his favourites. Babu Jadu Nath, I presume, is a Hindu of Brahmo beliefs, and evidently derives his opinions on marriage from Christian Europe. But he seems to be as informed about Europe and things European as Rip Van Winckle of the fables. A Mussalman friend of mine, who holds a high office in this country, and who has travelled all over Europe and Asia, told me the other day, that in point of sexual morality, even our uncouth peasants are saints as compared with the Christian Westerns and the Japs and the Chinese. I wish Babu Jadu Nath looked nearer home and wrote on the Kulinism and Dowryism, the two curses of Bengal and did a little service to his own sisters, real Devis, who prefer suicide to seeing their parents hopelessly involved in debt on account of them. The subjoined extract from the Epiphany of Calcutta, dated April 21st, 1917, will be read with interest in this connection :—

“There is a part of India where only the eldest son of a Brahman marries a Brahman girl, and the other sons take girls of lower castes as their concubines and cast them off at pleasure. We have been told of a Government official, the younger son of a Brahman, who, on being transferred from one station to another, takes a fresh concubine

in each new station, and leaves behind his former one to beg for food for herself and for her children. These poor women regard themselves as bound by a custom equivalent to law to surrender themselves to these Brahmans. Here is a fact for educated men to face ? ”

To turn again to Babu Jabu Nath's criticism. Continues he :—

A natural consequence of such teaching was the blind unquestioning devotion of the Sikhs to their spiritual head. The author of *Dabistan* who had frequently friendly intercourse with Har Govind, narrates a story (p. 193) how a certain Guru praised a parrot and a Sikh immediately went to its owner and offered to barter his wife and daughter for the bird. In other words he had no hesitation in dooming his wife and daughter to a life of infamy simply to gratify a passing fancy of his Guru. The perversion of moral judgement and ignorance of the relative value of things illustrated by this anecdote and another that I have omitted for the sake of decency are extreme : but so, too, is the spirit of devotion among the followers of the Gurus”. To this paragraph Babu Jadu Nath Sircar adds a foot-note and says :—

“ It shows that the Sikhs of the middle 17th century held the same views about women, as the Anabaptists of Munster did. Macauliffe.



considers this author's testimony of the Guru as of the highest importance" (IV 217).

When I read this extract and the foot-note, my anger knew no bounds and I recalled the talk I had with the late Mr. Macauliffe in the Nedou's Hotel, Lahore, years before his death, when he told me that the Sikhs should be thankful to him more for what he had not written than for what he had written. That was the time when Mr. Macauliffe's mind was like that of Jadu Nath Sircar's, when he saw ugliness where other men, far superior to his Christian countrymen morally and spiritually saw beauty and purity. I told him point blank that I, at least, would not thank him for what he said he had done. I would have wished to see the Gurus painted as they were; so that the world might know their strong and weak points, if any, and see for themselves how far they had succeeded in living up to the lofty ideals they set forth. I eagerly took up Mr. Macauliffe's volume and read the page quoted to find out if he, Mr. Macauliffe, had really written what was attributed to him. To my great relief there was not even a mention of the anecdote which Jadu Nath Sircar says he had omitted for the sake of decency. The expression, "of the highest importance" occurs in quite different passages in which the author of the *Dabistan-I-Mazahib* endeavours to show the extent of the wonderful influence of the Guru over his disciples.

Mr. Macauliffe could have easily omitted idle tales narrated by Mohsin Fani, the pseudonymous writer of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Much less there was the necessity, I am sorry to have to say, of regarding the man's testimony as "of the highest importance," merely because he says that he had "corresponded" with the Guru. I am a great admirer of Mr. Macauliffe. I worked with him and for him for a period extending over two decades. He had his strong and weak points, like any one else; but this much I can say, and with authority that he was a sincere man. When he took up the work of translation of our Scriptures and of the compilation of the History of our Scriptures and of our Gurus, he was only an ardent scholar, interested in religious research. But when, with years of labour and experience, he sifted truth from the fabulous accounts of the Sikh chroniclers (which book, dealing with great leaders of antiquity, is free from such defects?) from a more or less hostile critic, for it should not be forgotten that he was a born Christian, he was converted into an admirer and finally into a disciple of the Gurus. The last time he met me at Rawalpindi, on the occasion of the Sikh Educational Conference there, he said he had become a convert to Sikhism and when he departed from this world, at his home in London, he had on his lips the heart-consoling word of Sukhmani. Such a man could not have possibly allowed room to a libel about any

of the Gurus; though I must confess that in a voluminous work like his, replete with incidents taken from the works of chroniclers, with not very great literary pretensions, he has, here and there, unwittingly introduced topics which had no direct bearing on the general trend of the stories about the Gurus and which only serve to mar the beauty of his otherwise highly valuable work. Notwithstanding this defect, inseparable in the case of all writers, however erudite and honest, who write of alien men and things, to a critical mind of broad sympathies, conscious of man's frailties and his limitations, a perusal of Mr. Macauliffe's volumes is a privilege and a joy.

Altogether different is the case with Jadu Nath Sircar, whose one object seems to have been to paint Sikh men and Sikh History as black as possible and to invite towards them the contempt and contumely of the civilized communities. And yet this man is an educationist, one who is said to have spent on his work about 15 years of research ! And this work is being taught as a text-book in the Punjab, the home of the Sikhs ! But of this again.

To come to the tales the mere mention of which Babu Jadu Nath considers against all decency. They are two apparently. One that he has mentioned—a Sikh's bartering his wife and daughter to purchase a parrot the

Guru liked to possess. The other, which I may supply, is probably the conversion of Bibi Kaulan, daughter of a Musalman Magistrate of Mozang, near Lahore. It is difficult to say how much chaff and how much wheat there is in these tales; but, even if we believe them to be true, we can not conclude therefrom that there is anything necessarily immoral in them. The man who bartered his wife and daughter to satisfy the "passing fancy of the Guru" showed by his conduct that he valued his Guru more than his wife and daughter. There is nothing to be wondered at or to find fault with him. Only a Bedlamite would see in the simple act any moral dereliction. The famous Harishchandra of the Puranic tales sold his wife and child to a prostitute; but no-body has ever supposed that the queen and the prince, her son, were doomed to a life of infamy. There is, likewise, nothing in the story of Bibi Kaulan that any right minded man need be ashamed of. The tale is a brief and simple one. Bibi Kaulan, although born of Mussalman parents, was at heart a Sikh. When she became of age, she left her father's protection and took up her abode in Amritsar, presumably to have greater opportunities of having the sight of the Guru. She is said to have been an extremely pious and devout disciple. The contemporary Sikhs appear to have been devoted to her, judging from the memorials erected at Amritsar in her memory.

More than this there is nothing in the tale. Of course, one may conjure up anything to suit the tastes of the scandal-loving mob; but that will not be History. It may be mentioned here, in passing, that Guru Hargovind was not the only religious leader who had women worshippers. Even the blessed Christ, the saint of saints, had Mary Magdalene and other women as his devout admirers and worshippers.

Professor Jadu Nath continues.—This implicit faith in a common superior knit the Sikhs together like the soldiers of a regiment. The Sikhs were famous in the 17th century for their *sense of brotherhood* and love for each other. We quote the language of Bhai Gurdas:—"Where there are two Sikhs, there is *a company of saints*; Where there are *five Sikhs there is God*!". "The unity due to sameness of religion was further cemented by the abolition of caste distinctions; and to be a Sikh was to be as *free* in matters of eating and drinking as a Mussalman. "The *italics* are mine. The reader will wonder what there is in this extract which is open to objection. A closer perusal, with a little attention to the words italicised, will, however make the critic's meaning clear. It is the continuance of the same old harping on the theme of the alleged change of Guru Nanak's venue from spiritualism to materialism; from reliance on self or on the abstract divinity.

to surrender to another man. To show that I correctly interpret the Professor's mind I need only add the next paragraph of the article under notice which runs thus:—"Everything was, therefore, ready for converting the sect into a military body, obedient to its chief to the death, and what is even more difficult, *ever ready to surrender the individual conscience to that of the Guru*. If Cromwell's Ironsides could have been inspired with the Jesuits' unquestioning acceptance of their superiors' decisions on moral and spiritual questions, the result would have equalled Guru Govind Singh's Sikhs as a fighting machine". This extract makes abundantly clear how even a clever person of Jadu Nath's stamp can so forget himself as to write so foolishly. Even a tyro in social and political science, or in the domain of ethical philosophy can easily see that no organisation can work to advantage unless it has some one to control it on whom implicit reliance can be placed for the time being. And even a common tramp in the streets can understand that when Bhai Gurdas talked of God being present where there were five men he simply meant to emphasize the importance of consultation with superior men of one's faith. In fact the observance of this principle of laying before an assemblage of "Five Sikhs" all matters of a controversial nature and abiding by its decision is in itself a complete refutation of Babu Jadu Nath's allegation that Guru Govind Singh's Sikhs

were required to surrender their conscience. On the other hand what the Sikhs did was quite an improvement upon what Babu Jadu Nath would wish them to do. Conscience is admittedly not an infallible guide. The consciences of a land-grabbling Africander and a Hinda Banprasti, of Gulliver's Big-Endians and Small-Endians, of a Christian monogamist and a Mussalman polygamist, of a European meat-eater and a Brahman Vaishnavite, would, every one knows, make different pronouncements on matters submitted to them for consideration. This being the case, the Sikh practice of laying one's wishes before an assembly of five men of known integrity and belonging to one's own church is the soundest thing imaginable. In fact the whole social and religious polity of the present day European nations, which are the foremost exponents of the democratic form of government is founded on this basic principle—the principle of submitting matters of common weal for consideration by a committee, representative of all interests. For the possession of this principle in their social and political autonomy, the Sikhs not of Guru Govind Singh, but of the previous Gurus also, whose characteristics Bhai Gurdas has described, have been so badly handled by a man occupying a professorial chair—a man who is supposed to possess something of a discriminating judgment, and a mind that can soar high to form a perspective of men and things ! *Re* Guru Govind Singh's Sikhs

being less free in communal matters than the Sikhs of the first three Gurus, all that I need say is that the truth lies the other way. The founder of Sikhism, Baba Nanak occupied and claimed the position of an absolute Dictator of his Church. He says:—

Je sau chandá ugwe Suraj charhe hazár

Ete chánan hundiyán Gur binghor andhár.  
i. e. "A hundred Moons may appear and a thousand Suns may rise, (but) with all this light without the Guru, it is intense darkness."

His two immediate successors acted on the same line. And to speak the truth, this absolutism was very much needed. The Baba was the mother of Sikhism, its first law-giver. The infant Sikh Church for the first few years required the full, complete, and unquestioned control of the mother. With the advent of the Sodhi Gurus began its adolescence and it arrived at its manhood when the last Sodhi Guru, Guru Govind Singh, held sway, and when he infused new life into the Church, by the administration of Amrita. Then it was that, reborn in the Guru, the Sikhs, under the inspiring name of Khalsa, Pure Ones, or Puritans, started on their wonderful career with new hopes, new aspirations and new ambitions. They were no longer Sikhs or disciples, they were the Guru's sons, his part and parcel, fully conscious of the high aims with which they



took birth and and extremely jealous of their own honour and that of their beloved Church; so much so that they were not afraid of calling the Guru himself to account when, with a view to test how far they had succeeded in cultivating their critical faculty, he saluted the tomb of a Mussalman saint with his arrow, a practice which he had so forcibly taught them to consider as highly sinful. These are the men whom our Bengali Professor assigns a position inferior to Cromwell's Ironsides, as men who had no will or thought of their own and who surrendered their conscience at the command of their Guru.

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## V

There is a section of Hindus in this Province who remember their heroes of Hindu Mythology with what reverence they can feel; but for great men of historical age they cherish little regard; perhaps because they know little of them. Particularly for Sikh Gurus and Sikhs generally they entertain feelings of antipathy. Why this should be so I cannot say. But the fact is there. Jadu Nath Sarcar apparently belongs to this species. He not only does not see an beauty in Guru Govind Singh; he actually sees in him much that deserves severe condemnation. Says he:—

“Govind steadily drilled his followers, gave them a distinctive dress and a new oath of baptism, and *began a policy of open hostility to Islam*. He harangued the Hindus to rise against Muslim persecution. His aims were frankly material. ‘Mother dear, I have been considering how I may confer empire on the Khalsa. I shall make men of all four castes lions and destroy the Mughals.’ And then adds the Professor “Clearly Nanak’s ideal of the Kingdom of Heaven to be won by holy living and holy dying, by humility and prayer, self-restraint and meditation, had been entirely abandoned” Again he says:—“Guru Govind lived in princely state, kept a train of poets in his court and made plenty of gold ornaments for himself and his family. His body guards were provided with arrows, tipped with gold, to the value of Rs. 16 each; and he had a big war drum, made in the imitation of Mughal Imperial band; while his troops insulted and robbed the subjects of his hosts, the Bilaspore hill Raja, like the liveried retainers of the barons of Mediæval England” I wonder what wrong there is in all this. Apparently Babu Jadu Nath sees thorns where there are roses and he pronounces anathemas where a man with his head over his shoulders would shower blessings. Guru Govind Singh’s appeal to Hindus “to rise against Muslim persecution” appears to him to have been a grave sin, and the Guru’s aim “to confer an empire” on his people the Babu regards as a positive error. Evidently

there is a radical difference between our standpoint and that of Babu Jadu Nath. To him ideal spiritualism implies complete suppression, rather total absence of all honourable sentiments. His ideal spiritualist is one who sees his father taken to a dungeon and then hanged and his body thrown to dogs, kites, and vultures to become their food ; but he leaves not a sigh and raises not a finger to protest against such an atrocity or chastise its iniquitous authors ! He sees his girl, wife, or sister, even his own mother, ravished by ruffians, before his very eyes ; but he feels no pain and sheds not a tear. He hears and sees every day hordes of savages come from the frontier. Wherever they go they carry "fire and sword" with them. He sees thousands of his poor countrymen and countrywomen taken into slavery and lead lives of shame and infamy ; but the thought for inflicting chastisement on the evil-doers strikes him not ! The only remedy that suggests itself to him is to "humbly pray" for blessings on the oppressors of his race ! He invites them to his house, feeds, them and hugs them to his breast !

I can well understand that Baba Nanak might have preached that the Kingdom of Heaven was to be won by 'humility and prayer'. I would rather say that all the Gurus believed in and acted up to this ideal and enjoined on their followers to follow it. But it is begging the question, pure and simple, to

confound winning the Kingdom of Heaven" with the "Kingdom of the Devil." The Kingdom of Heaven may truly be won by humility and prayer; but I say emphatically that "the Kingdom of the Devil," by which I mean the Turk rule, during which our religion was insulted and the holiest of our men met the cruellest of deaths, or any other rule with similar aims and objects, can only be won by methods resorted to by Baba Banda, or Hari Singh Nalwa or Lord Kitchener—by catching hold of the miscreants in authority and making short shrift of them.

And yet these methods, which appear to me to be sound and called for by the exigencies of the times, were not resorted to by any of the Gurus. Guru Har Govind only chastised the men directly responsible for his father's death. Guru Govind Singh, time and again, asked the Emperor Bahadur Shah to surrender to him the culprits, responsible for the burying alive of his infant sons, so that he might mete out to them the punishment they deserved for their heinous offence. The Guru even warned the Emperor that the delay in bringing the offenders to book would give rise to serious consequences. But no heed seems to have been paid to the Guru's warning. Discontent, therefore, brewed over the whole of the Sikh Punjab and when Baba Banda arrived from the Deccan to raise the standard of revolt the time-honoured edifice of the Turk rule toppled down. A

siesmotic wave shook the whole Empire. Here, there and everywhere, the earth was torn open into yawning chasms and big townships and cities where engulfed during the twinkling of an eye. All over the land grave yards and tombs burst open and the contents of these were consumed in a sort of a holocaust. In the dry and arid wastes of Manjah and Malwa and in fertile plains of the Doaba, blood flowed in torrents, till at last the whole race, to which the erstwhile tyrants belonged, felt and realized that it was under a great curse and ban. A prayer, consequently, went forth from the orphans and the widows and peace was restored. But the Government was no longer in the hands of the Turks. The Mussalman yoke had been thrown off and Guru Govind Singh's Sikhs had taken the direction of affairs in their own hands. This is the proudest era in our History ; though it might not appear so to an effeminate Babu whose race has always depended on others for the defence of their hearths and homes, and who have been with very few honourable exceptions quite dead to all feelings of bravery and chivalry. A history written by a soulless and heartless Frankenstein such as this must necessarily be a caricature and not a true statement of facts as they occurred.

But I am digressing. I was commenting upon the theory propounded by Babu Jadu Nath that it is wrong to punish evil-doers and that to correct them one should perform

devotional exercises, I have exposed the hollow-  
ness of the reasoning and have lucidly shown  
that the best way to clear the world of its  
riff-raff is to make short shrift of it. This is  
what the Rishis of yore did in our country, and  
this is what all civilized nations are doing now.  
To maintain peace and order large standing  
armies are maintained. The Police and the  
magistracy are busy, from day to day, in catch-  
ing criminals and placing them in the purgato-  
ries, I mean Jails and reformatories. Prayers  
go up from temples, mosques, and churches;  
but they are not meant for the condonation of  
lustful demons or for the edification of base-  
minded political despots, big or small. Where  
then is the sin of the Sodhi Gurus if they felt  
it their duty to deprive the Mughals of their  
sovereignty? And wherein was Guru Govind  
Singh wrong in wishing to free his country  
from the Mughal yoke or for desiring to confer  
the government of his country on his own  
people? It may be materialism, for aught I  
know, it may be, even, something more repre-  
hensible in the estimation of a purblind critic  
who misreads, misunderstands and misinterprets  
acts which rouse the noblest of instincts, stir  
up the purest of sentiments generally all over  
the globe. Fancy a man finding fault with the  
Sodhi Gurus for chastising a few villains and  
keeping up an armed establishment with a  
view to protect themselves and those dear to  
them, during the days when the rulers ruled  
not and were given to drinking and debauch

and when innocent wayfarers were at the mercy, everywhere, of high-way men in broad day light.

To speak the truth men performs penances, keep fasts, perform devotional exercises, and give charity, to reap the benefits of ardent spirituality. Our great sages and Rishis blessed people with things earthly as a reward for their godly lives and virtuous living. Hindus, Mussalmans, and Christians, all, pray for a grant of the earth's choicest fruits; and they all so devoutly offer their thanks-giving for the same. But our friend, Jadu Nath Sircar, Professor, materialist of materialists, hack-writer, a penny-a-liner, whose mouth would water at the mere sight of gold, takes Guru Govind Singh to task for his saying to his mother that he wished to confer an empire on the Khalsa or that he wore ornaments or possessed gold-edged arrows!!! Presumably Professor Jadu Nath is not a man of the ideals of the Khalsa. A Khalsa is not required to take a vow of poverty, or dress himself in sack cloth and ashes. On the other hand from his heart goes forth daily a prayer for a grant of the world's plenty and for power to defend and succour the weak and chastise the tyrants, wherever found. The reader will see how men, if so inclined, can contort and twist the meanings of the most innocent expressions and can make even angels appear as veritable hobgoblins.

Babu Jadu Nath describes Gurn Govind Singh's Sikhs as conscienceless men to whom subservience to the Guru was the highest bliss and they had no other criterion to judge what was right and what was wrong. To know what Gurn Govind Singh's Sikhs were, the best that one can do is to see what the Guru himself wished his followers to be. He called them Khalsas, not Sikhs. Here are the conditions the Guru imposes for a title to the honoured name of Khalsa (a Puritan).

Jágat jot japai nis básar

Ek biná mau naik na áne

Puran prem pratit sajai

Brat, gor, marhi, mat bhul na máne

Tirath, dán, dayá, tap, sanjam,

Ek biná na ek paichháne

Puran jot jagai ghat men

Tab Khálsa táhin nakhális jáne.

It means :—" He that meditateth, day and night, on the Ever Shining Light,

Letteth no other thought than that of the

One approach his mind.

Adorneth himself with perfect love and faith,

Believeth not in fasts, tombs, graves and  
sepulchres,

Recognizeth not pilgrimages, alms giving,  
commiseration, penances, and continence

as of any avail without faith in the One,  
Hath mind illumined with the light of the

Perfect One.



Alone deserveth to have a title to the  
name Khalsa " ||

This alone is enough to give an idea of the ideal Guru Govind Singh set forth for his followers. They long retained these distinguishing virtues. Even so late as the day of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the armies of the Khalsa, when engaged in their morning prayers, presented to European visitors the sight of angels seated together to sing the praise of the Lord of Hosts. Even now, notwithstanding the degenerating influences of modern materialism, a Sikh of Guru Govind Singh is essentially an ardent devotee, imbued with the enthusiasm of the early Crusaders, jealous of his own honour and that of his community, humble as a lamb, and loving as a fawn, true and generous like Rama, and brave and fearless like Lakshman, ever ready to lay down his life for a just cause, truly confident of a hearty welcome in his ever-lasting home of bliss—the lotus feet of the Lord God.

## NO. VI.

I shall briefly touch Professor Jadu Nath's next three paragraphs in which he hurriedly sums up the incidents of the life of Guru Govind Singh in which his one aim seems to have been to minimize the great Guru's influence and to detract from the glory of all that he accomplished. He even goes so far as to characterise the Guru's wars first with the

Rajas and then with the Moghals as having been waged from motives other than honourable. He refers to the martyrdom of Princes Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh and the bricking up alive of Princes Zorawar Singh and Fateb Singh in the walls of Sirhind, in the most unfeeling manner and remembers the Guru as a "hunted animal repeatedly changing his places of shelter." He alludes, in passing, to the establishment of military democracy by the Guru before he passed away. This one act is enough to entitle the Guru to be remembered with the highest respect. But Jadu Nath's thick head sees no beauty in this. On the other hand he triumphantly speaks of 20,000 Khalsas having been transported to the Trans-Indus Frontier, under the order of Aurangzeb, and there decimated by the Pathans of Barakzai and Yusufzai clans, a fact which no historian mentions and which may be dismissed as the outcome of the Professor's own imagination and then he says exultingly :—

Thus we see that the Moghal Government under Aurangzeb did succeed in breaking up the Guru's power. It robbed the Sikhs of a common leader and rallying centre. Thereafter the Sikhs continued to disturb public peace; but only in isolated bands. They were no longer an army, fighting under one chief, with a definite political aim, but merely moving bodies of brigands—extremely brave and enthusiastic; but essentially plunderers, uninspired by any ambition to build up an organized

government in the land. If Aurangzeb had been followed by worthy successors, these Sikh bands would have been hunted down as surely as the Mirza and Champat Bundelas had been in the past and Dhundia Wang and Tantia Topi were to be under the British rule. If Runjit Singh had not risen, there would have been no large and united state under Sikh dominion ; but a number of petty principalities in the Punjab, with ruling aristocracy of Sikh soldiers and these would have been silently absorbed in the expanding British Empire. The Persian and not the Sikhs gave the death blow to the Moghal Empire; and it was not from the heirs of Aurangzeb, but from the Afghan inheritors of Nadir Shah that the Sikhs conquered the Punjab". This is a long extract and to refute it, point by point, a regular chapter would be needed; but for fear that the reader's patience might not be exhausted I shall confine my criticism of it in as narrow a compass as possible. But before I do, so, I would crave permission to point out that Professor Jadu Nath has no data to go upon when he regards Guru Govind Singh as a political adventurer, now fighting with this prince and now with that, inspired with the one idea of self-aggrandizement and self-glorification. The Sikh chroniclers give a different but quite believable version of the cause of the fights. They all agree in holding that the Guru was busily engaged in literary pursuits after the martyrdom of his father. But seeing him

young and undefended Bhim Chand Kahluria, Raja of Bilaspur, artfully tried to eject the Guru and the Sikh colony from Anandpur; but when he failed in the attempt he maliciously poisoned the ears of the Subahdars of Sirhind, Jullundur and Lahore against the Guru. The result was the creation of a situation the Guru could never have sought. He seems to have been from his very early years imbued with the desire of liberating his countrymen from the yoke of the Tartars. In a small brochure, which does not form part of the compilation which goes after his name, *i. e.* the Dassam Granth, but which I believe to have been the Guru's own composition, he invokes unseen powers to grant him strength so that he might make short work of Turk India.

It must have been, therefore, suicidal for him to plunge himself into all sorts of difficulties and pick up quarrels with preeminently the best and most powerful of the Hindus, *i. e.* the Hindu princes of the hills, particularly when he was living in their midst and his own followers, the Barar Jats belonged to the far off sandy wastes of the southern Punjab. I may, therefore, safely presume that the Guru's quarrels with Bhim Chand were not of his own seeking, and that when the quarrels did begin other Hindu rulers and Mussalman chieftains, bound by the ties of kinship and friendship, were drawn into the quarrel and were arrayed against the Guru in spite of themselves. Thus, not unlike Napoleon Bonaparte, the Guru found

all powers turned against him, ready to fall upon him and put an end to his existence. But as not unoften happens, no one can take the life of him whom the Lord protecteth.

jis rákhe tis koe ná máre.

The Guru miraculously had the upperhand and his opponents were always worsted. But what other artifices had failed to achieve, treachery easily accomplished. Failing in the efforts to subdue the Guru by straightforward and honourable ways the enemy resorted to cunning and intrigue. They waited upon Aurangzeb at Delhi and they spoke to him so many lies that he became infuriated and in a moment of anger he ordered a *Jehad* to be waged against the Guru.

This act of Aurangzeb resulted in the Guru's evacuation of Anandpur, the tactical blunder of his men resulted in the martyrdom of the Guru's four sons and, though the Guru's influence was apparently destroyed and he was compelled to retire to the Deccan, men's minds were very much exercised over the iniquitous doings of the men in authority at the time; and it only required a small spark to set the whole country ablaze, a few years later, and to bring about a revolution, which culminated in the overthrow of the Turk rule. The readers will please compare this version of the Guru's broils with the Hindu Rajput Rajas of the hills with the thoroughly hideous, skeleton like summary given by B. Jadu Nath and judge for

themselves how far Babu Jadu Nath is right in his version of Guru Govind Singh's quarrels with his political opponents.

There is one more point which I like to mention here in this connection. The Sikh chroniclers give prominence to the report that Guru Govind Singh encouraged the hills chiefs in their refusal to pay their revenues to Muhammadan Subahs. Nay he actually sent them reinforcements when they opposed the march of invading generals who came to exact revenues. I believe there is a great truth in these statements. Years ago, I spoke to a friend about this political blundering (as I then thought it to be) of the Guru. It was courting death pure and simple. My friend smiled and said that the Guru really courted death, like the blessed Christ, and eventually died in order that his community should live, reborn into a noble existence. This opinion I now hold. The blessed Saviour taught his people to instil in to themselves the noble ideas of giving shelter to those who sought it and to acquire the capacity to do and dare without which life is one long series of abject subservience. The question may be asked why the Rajput Hill Rajas should have forgotten these friendly acts of the Guru and should have made common cause with the invading Turks in turning out Guru Govind Singh from Anandpure. The Rajput antagonists of the Guru were not the only persons who had forgotten how great was

their debt of gratitude to their benefactor. The world's history is full of instances in which men forgot their obligations and took the lives of their own benefactors. Nay, not unoften, they proved themselves most inveterate foes, void of all sense of honour and propriety.

- To come to Professor Jadu Nath's remarks. Babu Jadu Nath's statement that Mughal Government under Aurangzeb succeeded in "breaking up the Guru's power and robbed the Sikhs of a common leader and rallying centre," is no doubt true; but with this qualification that, immediately after, even in the life-time of Aurangzeb, the whole of the Punjab was in the throes of a great revolution, and when that old sinner closed his eyes, and his eldest son succeeded to the legacy of blood-spilling; for that was what was understood to be the occupation of kings in those times, after ridding himself of his brothers, according to the tradition of the family, the timid humble Sikhs rose in revolt and, though Bahadur Shah and later the Government of Farrukh Siyar, fairly succeeded by a resort to barbaric measures, in decimating the Sikh population, the seed sown by the Sodhi Gurus did not take long to germinate and shoot forth its branches and spread all over the land, till, at last, every village and every hamlet in the country was converted, as if by a magic wand, into a military camp, big or small, and every man felt within him a spirit equalling that of a

lakh and a quarter of men, which made him to give himself the name a *Sawa Lakh Khalsa*. There was no dearth of a leader. Every Sikh was a leader, and every Sikh was a follower. Whenever need was felt, men banded themselves together, under a man who resembled the Christian knights of yore, who yearnt to have an opportunity of doing some adventurous deed and winning the favour of his fellow-Sikhs and of his Gurus. The leaders and the led were inspired with the one thought of exposing and punishing wrong-doers. They were not temporising, time-serving and cunning adventurers, inspired with the aim of enslaving others and establishing kingdoms and empires. This was a defect in them, according to Jadu Nath Sircar. But on this all men are not agreed. Jadu Nath forgets that the Sikhs of Guru Govind Singh were Socialists. To them, as to their prototypes in modern European countries and in America, annexation of other people's lands, which is not possible without a resort to violence and bloodshed, was a hateful thing. Their bards sang the glories, not of warriors but of saints, and their sages taught them love of God and of man, and their priests thought they conferred the highest blessing on them when they prayed the Guru might bear them company every moment of their lives and they might have the gift of the Lord's name. Such men might be called "brigands" by a foul-mouthed Bengali. He might compare them to Champat Bundélas or Tantia Topis. But to



the students of Sikh history and of our folklore the name of the Sikhs of Guru Govind Singh is one to conjure with. Round the memory of each and every one of them gather tales of heroism, unsurpassed in the annals of the bravest of peoples that have ever lived. Every tree that shaded them, every well that quenched their thirst, every ravine where they bathed, every hill or mountain whereon they bivouaced, every bush or cavern which gave them shelter, has become sanctified by the touch of their feet and is an object of worship and regard. I have wandered through most of the places so sanctified, and have seen men and women, regarded as ignorant by the alumni of our God-less, soulless, aimless, feelingless universities and schools, illumining them by night, guarding them by day, and showing their regard and attachment for them in many other ways. Most of such places are seats of pilgrimages or are resting places for the wearied way-farer; and I have sighed that, for a mere pittance, I should have wasted the best part of my life and should have been compelled by circumstances to deny myself the luxury of circumambulating round these sacred places and ending my days in their elevating atmosphere. So long as we have such sacred associations, so long as our mothers give birth to sons and daughters whose breasts swell with feelings of love and admiration for those who have ennobled their past, who have won them name and fame and have set them examples of the

loftiest patriotism, our position of honour in world's history is assured.

To come to Jadu Nath's last contention. He thinks our ancestors got the rule of the Punjab from the Persians and not from the Mughals. I fail to see the point of the remark. What does it matter who held Punjab before it fell into the hands of the Sikhs? The Mughal, at that time, was as good as a dead rat. The Persian or the Kabuli Pathan was the master of the situation. He rung the death-knell of the Mughal and when that ceremony was over, he bestowed Punjab on his Sikh allies. This gift was well preserved by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, popularly called the "Lion of the Punjab", and, if the Maharaja's favourites, the Jammu princes, had not betrayed their trust, if his Brahman councillors had not played false, and if the great British people, equipped with their older civilization, superior diplomacy and higher morals, had not appeared on the scene or, what is particularly noteworthy, if Maharaja Ranjit Singh had not absorbed smaller confederate Sikh States and had not concentrated all power in himself, against the principles of organisation, laid down by Guru Govind Singh, the Sikh Empire would have continued to flourish and prosper for generations to come. But this was not to be.

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